

12. C. C. 1  
3  
Popery *not* CHRISTIANITY.

---

A  
S E R M O N

Preached at

*Little St.* H E L E N ' S ,

T O T H E

S O C I E T Y

T H A T

Supports the LORD'S-DAY Morning  
Lecture there,

On AUGUST 1, 1750.

---

By W I L L I A M P R I O R .

---

*Published at the Request of the SOCIETY, and  
MINISTERS present.*

---

---

L O N D O N ,

*Printed for R. HETT in the Poultry; E. GARDINER  
in Lombard Street; and J. JOHNSON at Ratcliff  
Cross. MDCCCL.*

[Price Six Pence.]

3





R E V. xviii. 4.

*Come out of her, my People.*



HOEVER reads the Scriptures with attention will observe, that the *Spirit of Prophecy* speaks expressly there of a grand Apostacy from the Christian Faith and Worship. In these sacred Books it is plainly foretold, that under the Gospel Dispensation, there would arise a *Man of Sin, whose coming* would be *after the working of Satan, with Signs and lying Wonders*,—the chief Seat of whose Residence would be in the *great City on seven Hills, the Mother of Abominations*;—who sitting in the temple of God would oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God;—who would make War with the Saints and overcome them:—And, being drunken with  
A 2 their



#### 4 *Popery not Christianity.*

*their Blood\**, would, for an appointed Season, riot in great Pride and Affluence. All these Predictions we, who live in these later Ages, have seen surprisingly fulfilled in the Church of *Rome*; a Church, that assumes the Name of holy Catholic, and condemns all that dissent from her, as Schismatics and Reprobates: But which is really in her whole frame an Usurpation on Christianity; a Dishonour to the Religion of Nature; and a Faction against the common Rights of Mankind, founded on Craft, supported by Violence and Blood!

Our Fathers beheld *this Mystery of Iniquity* with Abhorrence and manly Indignation: But the present Generation seems not to be so well acquainted with its fatal Tendency. The Emissaries of the ROMAN SEE are ever busy to make Profelytes; and we are often alarmed, as if this senseless, destructive Scheme was gaining Ground among us. On these Accounts it will not be improper *fairly* to represent the gross Corruptions of the *Roman Church*;—the Idolatry of her Worship;—the Absurdity and Impiety of her distinguishing Doctrines;—the Tyranny and Cruelty

\* 2 Thess. chap. ii. Rev. chap. xiii. and xvii.



*Popery not Christianity.* 5

ty of her Principles and Practices;—hereby to revive in Mens Minds the decaying Horror, and to guard them against the Arts of those, *who lie in wait to deceive.*

The Words of the Text are an Exhortation to the People of God to come out of *Babylon*. That by *Babylon* can be intended no other Place but *Rome*, is confessed by all, even by Popish Writers themselves. The only controverted Point is, whether we are to understand it of Pagan or modern *Rome*. Be this as it will; most certain it is, the Character here drawn of *Babylon* is an exact and complete Picture of *Rome* in its present State of Popery. It is further certain, where the Simplicity of the Gospel is corrupted by the Inventions of Men; where the Unity of the Church is broken by new Terms of Communion; where Things superstitious and dangerous to Mens Souls are brought into the Church; where such things are to be found, as are practised and imposed in the *Roman* Church; we are as much obliged to withdraw ourselves from that Church, as if we heard a Voice from Heaven, saying, “*Come out of her, my People.*” ’Tis a Debt we owe to God, to Liberty, to Truth. ’Tis an

## 6 *Popery not Christianity.*

an Act of Homage and Allegiance due to Christ, who is appointed sole Lord and King in his Church. We cannot abide in her Communion without *partaking of her Sins*, and without being in danger of *receiving of her Plagues*.

To support this general Charge I observe,

*First*, The Worship of the Roman Church is *idolatrous*. The Scripture command is, *Thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and him only shalt thou serve* †. This Command is enforced by the strongest Reason: *For we know that an idol is nothing* \*; and that to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all Things; and one Lord or Mediator, Jesus Christ, through whom alone we have access to the Father ‡. These are the express Declarations of Christ and his Apostles. This is the pure, unmixed Doctrine of the Gospel. But in direct Opposition to all this, the Church of Rome hath presumed to set up *Lords and Mediators* many. It has put *Angels and Saints* into the Mediatorial Throne together with Christ: Yea, it makes them

not

† Mat. iv. 10.

\* 1 Cor. viii. 6.

‡ 1 Tim. ii. 5. Ephes. ii. 18.

*Popery not Christianity.* 7

not only associates with Christ, but in many cases it sets them absolutely above him : For to many of their Saints, especially to *Mary*, the Mother of our Lord, they address their Prayers more frequently, and more devoutly than to him, even in a Stile as high and rapturous, as to the ever blessed God himself. This is evident from the constant Language of their *Missals* and *Breviaries*, their *Liturgies*, and other Books of Devotion, set forth at *Rome* by public Authority. In these the Virgin is call'd " the *Mother of Mercy*, the " Hope of the World, and the only Trust " of Sinners; the Queen Regent of Paradise; who not only commands the Creatures, but God himself; who is more " merciful to Sinners than Jesus Christ." These extravagant and profane Compliments bring to one's Mind those awful Words of the Apostle; *Because they received not the Love of the Truth, for this cause God shall send them strong Delusions, that they should believe a Lye* \*.

Most strict is the Prohibition of *Images* to the *Jews* in their worship. *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven Image, nor any like-*

\* 2 Thef. ii. 10, 11.



## 8      *Popery not Christianity.*

*likeness of any Thing, that is in Heaven above, or that is in the Earth beneath. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them* \*. Not only *Moses*, but other sacred Writers, both among the *Prophets*, and the *Apostles* of our Lord, represent this Prohibition, as founded, not on mere positive authority, but on Reasons, that are moral and perpetual. But this very Iniquity, which the Scripture severely condemns, the Church of *Rome* has dared to establish by a Law. She sets up Images and bows down to them, not as *objects of Worship*, say some of her cautious Defenders, but only as *Emblems* and *historical Memorials*. Be it so, still the Practice is utterly inexcusable; 'tis absurd and immoral, equally so with the *Israelites* worshipping the golden Calf.—But this is a false Representation. The *Romanists* are instructed to believe, that there is a Divinity residing in those Images: They ascribe God-like Powers to them, and they pray *directly* to them, for all the Blessings of this Life and of the next. So high is their Presumption risen, as to form to themselves Images of that infinite, eternal Mind, whom *no Man hath seen nor*  
can

\* Exod. xx. 4.

*Popery not Christianity.* 9

*can see*; whom therefore to describe by *Lines* and *Figures* is a manifest Opposition to the Doctrine of Revelation, and shocking to the undepraved Sense of Nature. They give religious Homage to Pictures and Relicks, to moulded Clay, to painted Canvas, and carved Stones. The highest Acts of Adoration are paid by them to an inanimate Wafer, and to every pectoral Cross. Thus that Antichristian Church defiles the Temple of God with Idols, and in many respects is guilty of as stupid and abject an Idolatry, as ever was practised by ROME in its antient State of Heathenism.

The Plainness and Simplicity of Worship, which the Gospel prescribes, is its Dignity and Glory. By human Embellishments, by mixing Things of a foreign Nature with it, its native Beauty is tarnished, and its Dignity much debased. Here the Governors of the Church of *Rome* have wanton'd, and been very luxurious. Pure Christianity they have hid under a thick Veil of unmeaning Ceremonies; and by ridiculous Fopperies, and numerous Rites, the very Dregs of Pagan Superstition, they have so wofully disfigur'd its original, fair, lovely Complexion, that scarce

10 *Popery not Christianity.*

any traces of it appear. By that degenerate Church all Religion is turned into Pageantry and Grimace; and a much greater Stress is laid on Fastings and going Pilgrimages, on bowing to Crucifixes, and servile Prostrations before the Shrines of pretended Saints, than on moral Goodness.

In the second Place, The *distinguishing* Doctrines of the *Roman* Church are impious and absurd. So flagrant is the Absurdity and Impiety of them, that one would really wonder how there could have risen among Men, either *Impudence* to propose, or *Stupidity* to swallow them. But we are not ignorant of the *Devices*, by which Popery was first established, and rose by degrees to its present enormous size of Superstition and Extravagance.—About the fifth and sixth Century after Christ, clouds of Darkness came down from the North and overshadowed the Nations. Ambitious, designing Men found means to avail themselves of the general Blindness, and to make the unreasonable and oppressive Scheme go down.

That the Bishop of *Rome* is the *unerring* Vicar of God upon Earth, and hath supreme



*Popery not Christianity.* II

preme Authority over the Church, is a fundamental Doctrine of Popery \*. This arrogant and presumptuous Claim is founded upon two strange Suppositions;—that St. *Peter* was the visible Head of the whole Church; and that the Bishop of *Rome* succeeds him in the Fulness of his Authority. But the whole is a groundless Pretence, for which there is not one Word in the New Testament. There we are commanded to *call no Man Master*; to acknowledge no human Authority in Matters of Religion; but to remember that *one only is our Master* and Lawgiver, even *Christ*, and all Christians are *Brethren* †. In contradiction to these divine Commands, the *Roman Pontiff* grasps at universal Empire, and lays claim to the Kingdom of this World, and to the Keys of Heaven. In temporal Matters he assumes a Power of discharging Kings and Subjects from their Oaths, and of dissolving every Band of Society. In Matters spiritual he assumes a Power of *binding* and *loosing*, of *retaining* and *remitting* Sin;—of putting Men into a State of Salvation or Damnation, just

\* *Council of Trent*, p. 79, 82.

† *Matth.* xx. 25.

## 12 *Popery not Christianity.*

as he pleases. The Titles which have been given him, which he has accepted and encouraged, are, “ his divine Majesty; “ our Lord God, the Pope; a sovereign “ Monarch, who sustains the Person and “ Character of the Omnipotent God amongst “ Men \*.” These are *some of the Marks of Blasphemy written on his Forehead.* Thus this Vicar of Christ resembles him, who was *meek and lowly in Heart*, and who condescended to *wash his Disciples Feet* †. Thus St. Peter’s Successor imitates the Apostles, who claimed *no Dominion over the Faith of Christians*, but were content to be *helpers of their Joy* ‡.

Should I assert, that the Almighty Power of God cannot act Impossibilities or reconcile Contradictions, I should not fear to offend the divine Author of our being. Yet this is a small Matter with *Rome*. Good is no longer good, when opposed to her Measures: Evil is no longer evil, when committed to promote her Purposes. She suspends the whole moral Law, even the eternal, immutable reason of Things. This she annihilates  
and

\* *Vid. Chandler’s Account of a Conference,*

† John xiii. 5.

‡ 2 Cor. i. 24.

and creates anew at pleasure. There is no Virtue, which she does not condemn; no Vice, which she does not sanctify in turn. All Nature is but a Juggle in her hands.

That the common People are not to examine into their Religion, but to take it implicitly from the Church, is another principal Doctrine of Popery. And it must be allowed, that this is a necessary Principle to support Schemes of Doctrine, which bid defiance to Reason and are inconsistent with the whole Tenor of Revelation. These things will not bear the Light, nor stand a free and impartial Trial; and therefore are sheltered under the Covert of Ignorance and Darkness. But can any thing be more absurd than such a Conduct as this? 'Tis error only that is afraid of a full Examination: It must always be for the Advantage of Truth to appear in as much Light as possible, it wants but a fair Field to make its Defence, and to crown itself with Victory. The Scripture itself is so far from debarring the People of their right of examining, that it enjoins and encourages it in the strongest Terms. They were not the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* and *Doctors of the Law*, but the



## 14 *Popery not Christianity.*

the common People of the Jews, to whom our Saviour said, search the Scriptures\*. The *Bereans* are greatly commended for their Study of them, and for examining even the Truth of the Apostles Doctrine by that Standard†. We find *Timothy* exhorted by *St. Paul* to adhere to the holy Scriptures, which from a *Child* he had learned, which were given by Inspiration of God, and were profitable for Doctrine—and Instruction in Righteousness §. Beloved, says one Apostle, believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits, whether they be of God‡. Prove all things, says another, and hold fast that which is good ||. Yet for all this the Church of *Rome* has the Face to forbid the People to read the Scriptures under Pain of Damnation. It is expressly ordained, that “if any of the People presume to read a Translation of the Bible, unless they have a Licence from the Bishop, (a favour seldom obtain’d) they shall not receive the Remission of their Sins\*\*.” Your Bibles, Christians, were *Popery* in power, must be all burnt. This Book of God, this holy

Volume

\* John v. 39. † Acts xvii. 11. § 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16.  
‡ 1 John iv. 4. || 1 Thes. v. 20. \*\* Ind. Lib. prohib, reg. 4.

Volume of inestimable Treasure, your Light in Darknes, your Comfort under Affliction, your Direction to Heaven, must be snatch'd out of your Hands; and in its Room, your Hands must be filled with fabulous Legends of fictitious Saints, and false Miracles; such as Diseases instantly cured by Relicks, speaking Images, travelling Chapels and other such extraordinary Curiosities.—They make void the Law of God by their impious traditions. They put out that Light, which would expose the Folly and Wickedness of their Conduct. They take away the Key of Knowledge, so as neither to enter into the Kingdom of God themselves; and those who are willing, they binder †. Further,

The Church of Rome teaches, that after Consecration there remains no Bread or Wine in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and that the Substance of Bread and Wine are changed into the real Body and Blood of Christ. If this Doctrine is true, then all Evidence from Sense must be rejected, and the whole Structure of the Christian Faith falls at once. The best Proof we have for the Truth of Christianity itself, arise

† Luke xi. 52.

## 16 *Popery not Christianity.*

arise from the Evidence of Sense ; from the Testimony of those, who were Witnesses of our Saviour's Miracles and of his Resurrection. But according to the system of the Romish Divines we must flight the Information of Sense, and pronounce a Wafer to be Flesh and Blood : We must believe that Christ held his whole Body in his Hand and gave his whole Body to be eaten ; that it is whole in one Place and broken in another : We must believe—that the Accidents of Bread subsist without their Substance, and the Substance of the human Body without its proper Accidents—that the Priest has Power to create God when he pleases. In short, than the Doctrine of Transubstantiation nothing can be more monstrous ; unless it be the setting up of *Infallibility* in the midst of such Abominations. To teach things impossible to be true, and to maintain at the same Time that the Teachers of them *cannot err*, is such an Indignity to the human Understanding, and such an Insult on common Sense, as 'tis above the Power of Language to express. To enumerate all the vile Doctrines of this apostate Church, and to expose them in their



their proper Dress would lead us too far. Let it suffice to observe here, these Boasters of Infallibility take upon them to corrupt the Bible; to curtail the ten Commandments; to multiply Sacraments, to withhold from the People the Cup of Communion, to enjoin publick prayers in an unknown Tongue, to sanctify Vice by Bulls of Indulgence, and to fix certain Prices to be paid for the Commision of the most enormous Sins. By the Impurities of their Mass the Merit of Christ's Death is denied, and by their Fable of Purgatory, the Terrors of a future Punishment are defeated. They teach that without auricular Confession and priestly Absolution there can be no Forgiveness with God; and that all the efficacy of the Means of Grace, and Man's Salvation itself, depends entirely on the inward Intention of the Priest. This is the *finishing* Stroke of ecclesiastical Tyranny, and such as delivers over the deluded People, Body and Soul, into the Dominion of the Papal Hierarchy.

Consider Popery in a religious View, and it must appear the just Object of universal Contempt: but consider it as a political

Contrivance to oppress the Liberty and engross the Property of Mankind, and it will appear a refined Scheme artfully adapted to answer that End. To obtain temporal Dominion, the Church of *Rome* begins with spiritual Usurpation; and first enslaves the Mind, in Order to reduce the Body to Servitude. All Virtue *without* her Pale she terrifies by Fines and Imprisonments: All Vice *within* she soothes and encourages by Dispensations and Pardons: By auricular Confession she dives into every Soul; By slight Penances she lays hold on every Purse, Give her all your Interest on Earth; and she readily compliments you with whatever Interest she has in Heaven: But to question her Prerogative is Infidelity and Atheism: to dispute her Decrees is downright Impudence and daring Presumption, and to disbelieve her Ordinances is Heresy: and Heresy is temporal Death and eternal Damnation.

We proceed to shew,

*Thirdly*, That the Principles and Practices of the Romish Church are *cruel* and *tyrannical*. The Christian Religion is manifestly

nifestly design'd and has the most direct tendency to conciliate Men's Affections, to compose their jarring Tempers to Harmony, and to promote universal Peace. The Precepts and Motives of the Gospel discountenance all Fierceness and Cruelty, all Bitterness and Wrath, all Strife and Variance: So does the Conduct and Example of our blessed Lord, the Author and Founder of our Religion. *He came not to destroy Men's Lives but to save them\**, to take away the hard and narrow Heart, and to reconcile Men to God, and to one another. He consented to the shedding no Man's Blood, but his own; and taught no Ambition, but that of being *great in the Kingdom of Heaven*†. His Disciples he furnished with no other Commission, but Miracles and Instruction; and with no other Revenge, but Prayers. Agreeable to the Precepts and Example of their Master, the Apostles declared that *the Weapons of their Warfare were not carnal*§, *that the Servant of the Lord must not strive*†, *and that the strong ought to bear the Infirmities of the weak*||. From the Beginning of their Ministry to the End of it, both

C 2

Christ

\* Luke ix. 56. † Mat. xviii. 4. § 2 Cor. x. 4.  
 † 2 Tim. ii. 24. || Rom. xv. 1.



20 *Popery not Christianity.*

Christ and his Apostles breathed forth nothing but the purest Love and most fervent Charity. This is the Temper and Spirit of Christianity. How different the Temper and Spirit of the Roman Religion! Most smooth and courteous indeed, while unarmed with Power; but at other Times most intolerant and unrelenting. Which persecutes with implacable Fury, where her Power reaches, all without Exception, who dare deny the Absurdities she commands to be believed, or refuse to practice the Superstitions she enjoins: which has probably destroyed more Lives than all the ten Heathen Persecutions put together.

It will be retorted by the Romanists, that *Protestants* have often persecuted Men for religious Opinions. The Fact is acknowledged and lamented. But in so doing they have shamefully deserted their Principles, and apostatised from their Profession: Whereas Persecution is a *fundamental* Principle, an *established* Article of Popery. It stands unrepealed upon Record. Every Weapon they use is sanctified; every Instance of Fraud, every Degree of Violence is consecrated. Cruelty is not only allowed, but *enjoined* as  
a Duty,

a Duty, and recommended as meritorious. No good Nature of their own, no Obligations from others, no Ties of Oaths and solemn Assurances, no Sense of Honour nor Awe of God are to restrain them from any Thing, that is for the Temporal Advantage of their Church. This is known to all who have read the fourth Council of the *Late-ran* and the Council of *Constance* \*. 'Tis there solemnly decreed that "Faith is not  
" to be kept with Hereticks, and that all  
" whom the Pope condemns as such, are  
" to be deliver'd up to the secular Arm, to  
" be burned without Mercy."

But how absurd the Principle! How criminal the Practice! The Pretence is to promote Religion. But what is Religion? Is it to repeat a Creed, to subscribe a Confession, or to perform a Ceremony! No, surely. True Religion is something more and better than all this. It consists in *doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God* †. *In visiting the Fatherless and Widow in their Affliction, and in keeping ourselves unspotted from the World.* In a divine Temper, and a divine Life. It is a reasonable and voluntary

\* Can. 3.

† Micah. viii. 8.

## 22 *Popery not Christianity.*

tary Service, flowing from the full Conviction of the Heart, and the approving Sentiments of the inward Man. And what can Violence do towards producing this inward Conviction? Can Fines take away Error, and Banishment drive nearer to Truth? Can Dungeons illuminate the Mind, and Shackles free from Prejudice? Can racking the Limbs rectify the Judgment, and burning the Flesh purify the Conscience? As reasonably might a Man expect to beat down a Wall by an Argument, or to set a broken Bone by a fine Harangue, as to remove the Errors of the Mind by Threats, and convince the Understanding by Tortures. Besides, Persecution tramples on the Rights of Conscience, invades the Prerogative of God, roots up the Liberties of Mankind, and spreads Devastation and Ruin, as far as its Influence reaches. It is the Off-spring of Hell, of him, who was a *Murderer from the Beginning*.

And yet this diabolical Principle is essential to Popery, and its great Support. So steadily has it been adhered to, as to depopulate and lay waste Towns and Cities, Nations and Empires.



To this was owing the dreadful Slaughter, occasioned by Pope *Julius*, who in seven Years destroyed no less than two hundred Thousand. This proved the Ruin of the *Albigenses* and *Waldenses*. Urged by the same Principle the Duke of *Alva* put to Death above thirty Thousand in the *Low Countries*. That Monster of Cruelty, the Court of Inquisition, is said in about thirty Years to have destroyed a hundred and fifty Thousand by various Kinds of Torments: And still remains in *Spain*, *Portugal*, and *Italy*, in its most ghastly Form, on purpose to hinder all free Inquiry, and to keep Mankind in the most slavish Subjection to a Hierarchy of ambitious, lazy, and debauched Priests. The horrid Massacre in *France* and *Ireland* can never be forgot. No humane, benevolent Person, can read the Account without weeping Eyes, and a bleeding Heart. — But we need not seek for foreign Instances, since the History of our own Nation will furnish undoubted Proof, that this Antichristian Church, for the promoting its Interests and the Extirpation of Heresy, has not scrupled to consecrate Treason and Murder, and to commit such vile Enormities, as a Savage would

would start at, and a Heathen be ashamed of!

*To hear the Matron's and the Virgin's Cries,  
The Screams of dying Infants, and the Groans  
Of murther'd Men, are Musick!*

This is no imaginary Satyr, merely to embellish a Discourse, or to raise the Passions of Men. The Censure is just, and writ too deep in Characters of Blood and Ruin, to be so much as denied by Papists themselves.—*O my Soul! come not thou into their Secret; unto their Assemblies, mine Honour, be not thou united; while their Anger is so fierce, and their Wrath so cruel\**; while Dungeons and Chains, Racks and Gibbets, and so many other Instruments of Cruelty, are in their Habitation.

And now what shall we think of a Church, that can erase the original Sentiments of human Nature, and transform Men into Creatures, so very opposite to what God made them? Certainly, they who have read their Bibles cannot but discern, that *Popery is not Christianity*. “If Blasphemy against God,  
“ and

“ and Tyranny over Men; if defacing the  
“ Ideas of Deity, and corrupting the Prin-  
“ ciples of moral Honesty; if subverting the  
“ Foundation of natural Religion, and over-  
“ throwing the essential Articles of the Chri-  
“ stian Faith; if all these are sufficient to  
“ exclude Men from being Part of the Chri-  
“ stian Church, the *Romanists* can have no  
“ pretence to it.”

These were the Sentiments of the first Re-  
formers: This is the Judgment of the Church  
of *England*; whose Homilies, set forth by  
Authority, and subscribed to by her whole  
Clergy at their Ordination, say expressly, that  
“ the Church of *Rome* has been for the Space  
“ of nine Hundred Years and odd, so far  
“ wide from the Nature of the true Church,  
“ that nothing can be more. And that, all  
“ they who have any light of God’s Word  
“ must needs confess, that the Bishops of  
“ *Rome* and their Adherents are not the *true*  
“ *Church of Christ* \*.” Whence is it then,  
that some of her professed Sons are so fond of  
deriving Orders from this pretended Church,  
and cry out of the Insignificancy of all Things  
else, without such Orders? To vindicate  
D them-

\* *Homily concerning the Holy Ghost, Part 2.*



## 26 *Popery not Christianity.*

themselves in this they now speak a softer Language than their Homilies; and venture to assert that the Church of *Rome*, this *Mother of Harlots*, which curses, and consigns to Hell all the Churches of the Reformation, is the Spouse of Christ, and a real Part of the Christian Church. These are fatal Concessions. The natural Consequence of them is the Promoting the Cause of Popery, and the Subversion of the Church of *England*; which may God, in much Goodness, defend against all the Attempts of Popery; and in his due Time, and the *gentlest* Manner, purge from any Errors or Corruptions, which may lessen the Perfection of its Beauty or Holiness!

As for this *Mystery of Iniquity*, which hath long been at work, and doth even now work, with too much success; the Scriptures have assigned to it a limited Line of Time; (much the greatest part of which is probably run out) at the Period whereof the *Lord shall consume this wicked one with the Spirit of his Mouth, and he shall go into Perdition, Heaven and Earth rejoicing over him* \*.  
O *Rome!* haughty cruel *Rome!* Thou hast long glorified thyself, lived deliciously, and said  
in

\* 2 Theff. ii. 8,

*Popery not Christianity.* 27

*in thy Heart, I sit a Queen, and am no Widow, and shall see no Sorrow: But thy Sins have reached unto Heaven, and God will remember thine Iniquities. Thy Plagues shall come upon thee in one Day: Death and Mourning, and Famine; yea, thou shalt be utterly burned with Fire; for strong is the Lord God, who judgeth thee\*.*

I would close the Subject with a few Remarks suitable to the present Occasion.

1. Let us be sincerely thankful to the great God of Heaven and Earth for past Deliverances from Popery and Slavery. There's no Nation that hath been favour'd with more remarkable Appearances of Providence than this Island. For a Proof of this we need not look further than the Reformation. Before this Time we were overspread with Darkness, and the *Abomination, which maketh desolate* was set up amongst us. At length was raised up a resolute and haughty Prince, who, as much out of Humour, as Principle, at once threw out the papal Tyranny. His Son, *Edward* the Sixth; the Wonder and Admiration of the Age, carried on the Work,

D 2

which

\* Rev. xviii. 7, &c.

28 *Popery not Christianity.*

which was but imperfectly begun by his Royal Father. The bloody Reign of Queen Mary almost crush'd the infant Reformation: But for *the Elect's sake* God shorten'd those Days. After her the Government was put into the Hands of a Princess of a great Soul; against whom, besides many secret Plots, the most bold and open Attempt was the *Spanish Armada*; a Design form'd by the united Councils and Strength of the Popish Party: But *he who holds the Winds in his Treasures* let them loose upon the Face of the great Deep. The Almighty triumphed over them gloriously; their Fleets and Warriors be cast into the Sea. In the Course of this Reign there were many, who were heartily disposed to a further Reformation; but the Zeal of the Popish Party, and the Stiffness of the Queen prevailed. It is really wonderful, that so great an Advance was made in reforming so corrupt a State of Things in so short a Time, and under all the Disadvantages of present Circumstances: And it is equally wonderful, that it should be carried no further in so long a Tract of Time; and that the *first Essay* of so great a Design should come to be thought a *perfect*



*fect Model*, and a *Standard* to all Posterity.

With the personal Character of Princes we meddle not, and would speak of them with all the Respect which is consistent with Truth: But it will scarce be deny'd by any, that, after the Days of *Elizabeth*, the *English* Honour was sunk under a Series of inglorious Reigns; and a Race of misl'd Princes seem'd to aim at making themselves little, and their Kingdoms contemptible. In the Reigns of the two *Charles's*, there were frequent Alarms of publick Danger, and perpetual Struggles for publick Liberty. In the next Reign there was an *open* Design of bringing in Popery, which had been *secretly* favour'd long before. On his Accession to the Throne, *James* the Second laid himself under all Obligations, divine and human, to preserve the Constitution entire. Did he do it? Far otherwise. The *Turk* would have thought it his Duty to adhere to such solemn Engagements: But the Royal Sons of *Rome* are too mighty for the Bonds of Oaths. They promise through Policy; but betray by Principle. That unhappy Prince, under the leading of Bigots, and perversion of Priests, sapped

### 30 *Popery not Christianity.*

fapped the very Pillars of *English* Liberty, and overturned the Building of that glorious Constitution, on which had been expended the Wisdom, the Blood, and the Toil of many Ages. These were Scenes of Gloominess and Darknes. These were Days of Horror and Despair. Some of the Eyes that saw these Times are still open among us. When all was driving on in the most furious manner, and our Ruin advancing with the greatest swiftness; then came our Help, and we were saved from the Hands of our Enemies. God inspired a wise and brave Prince for the Undertaking, and crowned it with almost miraculous Success. The Immortal WILLIAM saw the Distress of languishing *Britain*: He saw: He came: He saved her. The Spirit of Tyranny failed, as the Hero advanc'd; the Fury of Persecution fled before him, and Popery stole away in silence. To him we owe that we are Protestants; that we are free. To him, perhaps, the World is indebted, under God, that there is such a Thing as Liberty left upon the Earth. He sacrificed his Ease and Health to the publick Safety, and closed his Life with settling the Succession in the House of *Hanover*.

After

After his demise another Prince arose, under whom the Nation enjoyed great Happiness for several Years at home; and ten Campaigns, not to be matched in History, rolled on with uninterrupted Success in Wars abroad. Fame sounded its Trumpet, to publish through the World the Glory of the *British* Councils and the *British* Arms: When all on a sudden the Clouds gathered, in the Prophet's Phrase, *our Sun went down at Noon, and our Land was darkned in a clear Day* \*. Our Quiet was lost: Our Successes were stopped: Our Allies were deserted: The Voice of Fame was drowned by the Hissings of Envy, and the Clamours of Faction: The most zealous Friends to the Protestant Succession were disgraced; and Schemes of Slavery were formed. In this *lowering, threatening* Conjuncture, when even the Pretender to the Crown was on the Road to take Possession, (as his own Declaration informs us) divine Providence interpos'd, cut short the Royal Life in the critical Moment, and brought the illustrious Father of our present Sovereign to the Throne in Peace;—A Prince of great Experience in Government, and Firm-

\* Amos viii. 9.



## 32 *Popery not Christianity.*

Firmness of Mind; not to be discomposed by Insolence, or cajoled by Flattery; not to be startled at Danger, or betrayed into Secularity; who maintained Majesty without Stiffness, and was Brave without Roughness. Whose Religion was without Bigotry, and who was constant without Obstinacy; who always expressed an equal Regard for *all* his Subjects, and had nothing more at heart than his Peoples Welfare. Such was the Prince, whom by a wondrous Train of the most seasonable Providences a gracious God sent to rescue us, when on the Brink of Ruin, and to bless us with his Protection. The First of AUGUST is a Day, that will stand distinguished in the *British* Annals, and be remember'd with Honour and with Transport; by all who love true Religion and Liberty.

Not long was his late Majesty seated on his Throne, before a Rebellion broke out amongst us. A Rebellion without a Provocation, without a Grievance. Men of mistaken Principles, and restless Spirits, joined with profest Papists at home, and conspired with foreign Powers, to root out the Protestant Religion, and to set up a Popish Pretender to reign over a free and a Protestant People.

*But*

*But God is known by the Judgments which he executeth, and the Wicked were snared in the Works of their own Hands ‡.*

Our Religion and Liberties are once more endeared to us by a Deliverance of a very late Date. A few Years since we beheld our Country and its well-framed Constitution threaten'd with utter Destruction by an impious Invasion, which, elated with repeated Success advanced into the Centre of the Kingdom, and struck the Capital itself with no small Terror. What Paleness cover'd every Face! What Anguish fill'd every Heart! But God scattered our Fears and turned our Sorrow into Gladness. The presumptuous Invaders were beaten down and fled; and looked not back; for Fear was round about\*." Had the Attempt succeeded, how vast a Ruin must have followed! Then, farewell Freedom and Liberty of Conscience; farewell the peaceful Possession of the Sanctuary and the pure Religion of Jesus; farewell the inestimable Privileges of the Revolution, the Purchase of so much Blood and Treasure. Then, soon should we have seen our Rivers redden  
E with

‡ Psal. ix. 5.

• Jer. lvi. 5;

### 34 *Popery not Christianity.*

with Protestant Blood and the Flames of Martyrdom blaze in our Street. These are not mere Conjectures, and distant Probabilities; but the almost necessary Consequences of the supposed Success of our Enemies. What could be expected from *Rome*, but *Romish Superstition* and *Will-worship*! What from *France*, but French Tyranny and Oppression! What from an arbitrary Monarch and an *Italian* Papist, but the Ruin of all our established Rights, and the Entail of Misery on Posterity! But *the Snare is broken and we are escaped*. We see the Throne filled with a Prince of great good-will to Mankind and paternal Tendernefs to his Subjects; a Prince of unexampled Clemency, who punishes with Reluctance and pardons with Pleasure; who is a Friend to our Constitution, a Defender of our Laws, who knows his exalted Privilege of reigning over a free People, and by whom our Liberties are considered as the most radiant Jewel of his Crown. We see the Throne surrounded with a numerous Issue, from whence we hope for a Succession of wise and virtuous Princes, to be the Guardians of the civil and religious Liberties of Mankind, to protect the Rights



Rights and to make glad the Hearts of our latest Posterity. This Prospect is so pleasant that here I could delight to dwell: but the Time which spends much faster than my Subject, bids me proceed,—We hope your Hearts glow with Gratitude, while you hear these imperfect Hints, and are secretly crying out; *what shall we render unto the Lord for these his Benefits?* Let a Sense of the divine Mercy be recorded deep in your Hearts, and the happy Consequences of it enliven your Joy. *O remember the mighty Works he has done for you: clap your Hands all ye People, shout unto God with a Voice of Triumph. Sing unto the Lord a new Song; for he has done marvellous Things. The Lord hath made known his Salvation.* Let us not satisfy ourselves with a lazy Admiration and a frothy Joy; but shew our Gratitude by a religious and well-order'd Conversation.

'Tis not any Excellency in us, that has made so vast a Distinction between us and the Nations around us. If our Houses have not been plunder'd, 'tis not because the Worship of God has been more constantly performed in them: if our Air has not been

### 36 *Popery not Christianity.*

filled with the Noise and Triumph of insulting Foes ; 'tis not because it has not been polluted with Oaths and Blasphemies. If our Towns and Cities are not turned into Heaps of Rubbish ; 'tis not because they have been Mountains of Praise and Habitations of Holiness. We have all imaginable Reason to say with the Psalmist, *Not unto us O Lord, not unto us, but to thy Name do we give the Glory.*—" Oh Britain ! thou Nation saved  
 " and favoured of the Lord ! If the supreme Disposer has by signal Interpositions so often deliver'd thee, plunged as  
 " thou art into so many Excesses and Enormities ; what Felicity would not attend  
 " thee, were a general Reformation to prevail ! Every one who wishes thy Prosperity must wish a Change in thy Morals. For nothing is more certain than  
 " that the Virtue of a Nation, is its Strength,  
 " and that it becomes weak in the Degree  
 " it becomes corrupt."—If ever Popery, that sure Retreat of Vice, over-powers us, Immorality is the flood-gate, at which it enters ; and our Enemies found their Hopes of Success on our present Debauchery.

ry.—A Change of Religion is no great Stoop to those who have none.

2. Let us stand fast in that Liberty where-with Christ has made us free, and not suffer ourselves to be entangled with any Yoke of Bondage\*. The Cause of Protestantism is the Cause of Liberty and true Religion.—Its genuine Principles are the unalienable Right of every Man to judge and to act for himself in Matters of Religion; the sole Authority of Christ in the Christian Church, and the Perfection of the Scripture-rule.—Whatever is not contained in the Bible is no Part of the Christian Faith; whatever is contrary thereto must be disclaimed. These are the foundation Principles on which the whole Fabrick of the Protestant Reformation was at first raised, and on these alone can it be supported and defended. Happy had it been for the reformed Churchés, if these Principles had been always faithfully adhered to, and a persecuting imposing Spirit had been confin'd to that Source of Idolatry, to that Sink of Corruption, the Church of Rome. But there would be great Reason to accuse us of great Partiality, should we alledge that

none



### 38 *Popery not Christianity.*

none others are chargeable with any Share in it. 'Tis in vain either to deny or dissemble the Matter. There have been always too many among those, who have professed to throw off the Corruptions of that Church, that have been fond of retaining the usurped Power of it; who in Words indeed have disclaimed Infallibility, but acted as if they were really possess'd of it; who have formed Creeds by Votes and explain'd Articles of Faith by holding up of Hands; who have been for making their own Judgment, even in very abstruse Points, a Rule to their Fellow-Christians, and for imposing it upon them not only by severe Censures and an Exclusion from their Society, but likewise, when the civil Power was on their Side, by many temporal Penalties. We forbear entering further on this unpleasant Scene.

'Tis the peculiar Glory of the present Age, that a narrow Spirit is much abated among us, and that the Principles of religious Liberty are better understood than in former Times. Thanks to Heaven, Thanks to our civil Governours, we are quiet in our possessions and undisturbed in our Places of social Worship. Unaw'd by human Authority

riety and uncontrouled by any human Standard, we are permitted to enquire after the Truth of God's Word and to rest upon our inward Sense of it. No Man is Lord over our Faith; but our Consciences are sacred to God. We may think freely, and we may also speak freely, on the Side of Liberty, the Bible and Common Sense, in Opposition to Tyranny, Imposture and Nonsense; without being in Danger of the Bastile or the Inquisition; without any Fear of angry Synods, or enslaving Ecclesiastics. These are great, these are desirable Privileges. It concerns us not to abuse them; nor to neglect to improve them but to be solicitous to secure them to ourselves, and to make others Partakers of them. In speaking thus, there can be no Impropriety; while I am suppos'd to address myself to an Audience of Protestant Dissenters, to such as *know* their Principles, and who, we trust, will ever be careful with Honour to support and by a consistent Conduct to recommend them. From the Experience of past Ages, from the whole History of Popery 'tis evident, that when Christians have once been prevailed upon to shut their Eyes against the  
Light

40 *Popery not Christianity.*

Light of Reason and the Scriptures, and tamely to resign their Understandings to the Guidance of crafty Impostors, they have laid themselves open to all Manner of Delusion: No Absurdities so great, no Impieties so heinous, which they have not run in-to under the Pretext of Religion: Even Cruelty and Persecution have been esteem'd as Christian Virtues; and Deeds worthy of Hell have been consider'd as necessary in Order to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

But, Fellow-Protestants and Fellow-Christians, you have not so learned Christ. You have not learned, to pay a blind Obedience to any, nor in matters of Faith to acknowledge any other Master but Christ. You have been taught that 'tis a most absurd Attempt to *force a Belief of Truth*, and a most wicked Practice to *punish involuntary Error*. You have learned to distinguish betwixt Authority and Reason, *human Opinions* and *revealed Truths*. You don't think yourselves qualified to make any other Terms of Acceptance with God than what are already published in his Word; and you need no other Recommendation of any one to your sincere Love and cordial Affections, but his



*Popery not Christianity.* 41

his having the *Image* of God, and the Super-  
scription of the *holy Jesus* stamped upon him.

Go on, ye beloved of the Lord, to assert  
and maintain your natural Birthright, your  
Christian Privileges. Go on to cultivate a  
generous and catholic Spirit more and more.  
If there is any Sense of Honour, and any  
Concern to preserve the Dignity of human  
Nature; *If there be any Consolation in Christ,*  
*and any Comfort of Love,* let Popery, with  
whatever is derived from it, or resembles it,  
be your Abhorrence; especially, that worst  
part of it, a *domineering, persecuting* Spirit in  
all the *Branches and Degrees* of it. Let all  
violent Aversions, and a bitter Zeal, among  
Christians, at length subside. Let every in-  
vidious Name of Party-distinction perish for  
ever. Let the unfriendly Suspicion, the harsh  
Censure, and shy Behaviour, be no more.  
Let all that are Servants of the same God,  
that walk by the same Rule, and are going  
to the same Heaven, be dear to one another,  
however they may be distinguished by the Di-  
versity of their Speculations, and external  
Modes of Worship.

Above all, we would exhort the Friends  
of Liberty, not to *use Liberty as an Occasion*  
*to the Flesh, but to shew out of a good Conver-*  
F *sation,*

## 42 *Popery not Christianity.*

*sation, their Works with Meekness of Wisdom,* James iii. 13. While they carefully guard against the Transports of a wild Zeal, let them with equal Care avoid the opposite Extreme of Lukewarmness in the great Business of Religion; and to the Love of Truth let them join an ardent Concern for solid Piety and universal Virtue. How strange the Contrast! How inconsistent the Character, to be Professors of the Reformed Religion, and at the same Time to have no Religion at all! To be *zealous Protestants*, and yet not to be *Christians* all the while; but Infidels in Speculation, and Libertines in Practice! *We hope better Things of you, even Things that accompany Salvation.*

You will bear with us, if we beseech you, by the Mercies of God in Jesus Christ, by all the Regards you have to your best Interest, to *adorn the Doctrine of God your Saviour* by living *harmless and blameless without rebuke*, as becomes *the Children of God*, the Heirs and Expectants of Heaven; to *walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith you are called*, *forbearing one another in love*, endeavouring to *keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bonds of Peace*. Let the World see, that in your whole Conduct you are governed by the dic-  
tates

*Popery not Christianity.* 43

tates of the *Wisdom that is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality, and without Hypocrisy.*

And, when ! O ! when, will the glorious Day shine upon our World, when the Religion of Jesus, cleared from that heap of suffocating Rubbish that has been laid upon it, shall universally prevail over the whole human Race, calm their furious Passions, and inspire the most benevolent Sentiments ! When not only the *flaming* Persecutor, but the *little* Bigot, and the *waspish* Zealot, shall be Characters no where found on Earth ? When, setting aside all Prejudice and Prepossession, all Party Schemes, and selfish Views, the Disciples of Christ shall receive one another upon the true scriptural Terms of Christian Communion, and *with one Heart and with one Mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ! When the Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard lie down with the Kid ! When there shall be no hurting or destroying in all God's holy Mountain \**. When Truth and Love shall embrace and reign ! This happy, and prosperous State of the Christian Church is in Scripture

\* Isa. xi. 6. &c.



#### 44 *Popery not Christianity.*

ture expressly promised, and will, we hope, e'er long be erected. *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.*

In the mean while, let our Eyes be lifted towards Heaven in fervent Prayer, That none of the Artifices of the Church of Rome may blind the Eyes of the People against the Immorality of her Doctrines;—that the Protestant Interest may be owned and propagated;—that the Blessing of Heaven may rest upon all Protestant Princes, and especially upon our only rightful Sovereign King GEORGE, and every Branch of his august Family;—that pure, uncorrupted Christianity may every where take Root and spread; and that Christians of all Perswasions may live and behave in such a Manner, as to meet at last in the general Assembly above; where there are no angry Disputes, or Party Quarrels, to pall the Pleasure of Conversation among the blessed Society; where perfect Light shall remove all Difference of Judgment, and perfect Love heal all Disaffection; where Faith shall end in Vision, but *Charity never fails.*—God Almighty grant this through Jesus Christ, to whom be Glory in the Churches. *Amen.*

F · I · N · I · S.

